

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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## WATERFOWL REFUGE ACQUISITION PROGRESSES IN 11 STATES

Thirteen National Wildlife Refuges were authorized to acquire more than 17,000 acres of prime waterfowl nesting and feeding habitat by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission during its May meeting, Nathaniel P. Reed, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, announced today.

"These decisions promise a brighter future for America's marvelous migratory bird flocks," Reed said. "The Commission's action will preserve valuable wetlands acreage along the east coast of Maine, New Jersey, Delaware, and Florida which will provide stopover resting spots and wintering areas for ducks, geese, swans, and other migratory birds. The Atlantic Flyway suffers more than any other migratory bird flyway in the Nation because of the rapidly diminishing open spaces."

All 13 refuge acquisitions were lands within the boundaries of existing refuges. These acquisitions will complete Prime Hook Refuge, Delaware; Brigantine Refuge, New Jersey; Lacassine Refuge, Louisiana; and two divisions of the Rachel Carson Refuge, Maine.

Reed applauded the Commission decisions to acquire acreage that completes the National Wildlife Refuges at Prime Hook and Brigantine, both of which are important resting spots. "The completion of these two units will allow the refuges to intensify management for waterfowl breeding, in addition to their functions as rest stops along the flyway. Perhaps 50,000 or more birds a year will now be using these wetlands."

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"The National Audubon Society and the Philadelphia Conservationists, Inc. deserve singular praise for their assistance in acquiring lands for the Brigantine and Killcohook Refuges," Reed said. "Had they not moved in and bought or leased portions of these valuable wetlands years ago, the areas might now be housing or resort developments. The Interior Department and the American people are indebted to the selfless devotion to conservation of these fine organizations."

The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission was set up in 1929 with the passage of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act to oversee and approve acquisition of migratory bird habitat lands. The acquisitions have been mostly funded from the receipts from the sale of duck stamps. The sale of duck stamps now produces about \$11 million annually for wetlands preservation.

Members of the Commission are the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, and Transportation, Senators Henry Bellmon of Oklahoma and Lee Metcalf of Montana, and Representatives Silvio Conte of Massachusetts and John Dingell of Michigan.

Approved by the Commission at its recent meeting were the following land acquisitions on the National Wildlife Refuges named:

<u>Refuge</u>	<u>Acreage To Be Acquired</u>
Killcohook NWR, New Jersey	42
Arapaho NWR, Colorado	7,270
Chassahowitzka NWR, Florida	40
Brazoria NWR, Texas	385
Swan River NWR, Montana	1,077
Prime Hook NWR, Delaware	2,046
Lewis & Clarke NWR, Oregon	1,595
Brigantine NWR, New Jersey	7
Rachel Carson NWR, Maine	305
Las Vegas NWR, New Mexico	5
Lacassine NWR, Louisiana	81
Sherburne NWR, Minnesota	451
San Bernard NWR, Texas	3,970

This acreage is only a portion of the land within the established boundaries of the refuges named above and represents the culmination of what typically is a lengthy period of acquisition for legal rights to and purchase of the lands.